

pick and choose where they can conduct those kinds of investigations.

Every year, about 100 firefighters die in the line of duty in America and about 87,000 are injured. This fund is an investigative fund that helps find ways in which we can protect firefighter lives—whether there is a certain kind of equipment that might have made a difference or a certain procedure that might have made a difference. Obviously, for those fire stations, fire houses with the losses or those that face a future risk, to know we are selectively choosing where we investigate and where we do not does not do the job. We need to investigate all of those fatalities, and we need to do everything possible to provide our firefighters the procedures and equipment necessary to save lives.

This funding will add an additional \$2.5 million to that investigative fund and allow us to complete our responsibility to those courageous firefighters across the country.

I ask unanimous consent a letter from the International Association of Fire Fighters and the International Association of Fire Chiefs be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

October 18, 2007.

Hon. JOHN F. KERRY
304 Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR KERRY: On behalf of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, representing nearly 13,000 chief fire and emergency officers, and the International Association of Fire Fighters, representing more than 280,000 professional fire fighters and emergency medical personnel, we are writing to express our strong support for your amendment to the FY 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Act providing \$5 million for the Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program (FFFIPP) of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

Of the 1.1 million fire fighters who selflessly serve their communities and their country, approximately 100 die on the job each year. Additionally, the National Fire Protection Association estimates that 80,100 fire fighter injuries occurred in the line of duty in 2005 alone. The FFFIPP is instrumental in discovering the primary factors contributing to fire fighter deaths and recommending ways to prevent future deaths and injuries.

Since its inception in 1998, the FFFIPP—in cooperation with fire departments and fire fighters around the country—has conducted over 300 fatality investigations. The findings and recommendations of these investigations have led to increased awareness of fire fighter safety and health hazards, and led to numerous cooperative efforts among and between the fire service and NIOSH to improve fire fighter safety and health.

Despite such successes, fatality investigations are not as common nor as comprehensive as they should be. According to a recent report by the inspector general of the Department of Health and Human Services, such shortcomings are caused, in part, by a lack of resources.

Congress clearly intended for NIOSH to thoroughly investigate every fire fighter

line-of-duty death. By doubling the funding allocated for the FFFIPP in FY 2007, your amendment will allow NIOSH to better fulfill its Congressional mandate and help prevent fire fighter injuries and deaths.

Thank you for your leadership in protecting the health and safety of our Nation's first responders. We look forward to continue working with you to prevent future deaths and injuries among fire fighters.

Sincerely,

CHIEF STEVEN P. WESTERMANN, CFO,
President, International Association
of Fire Chiefs.

HAROLD A. SCHAITBERGER,
General President, International
Association of Fire Fighters.

Mr. KERRY. I think both sides have now agreed to this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, can we withhold for a second? The amendment by the Senator from Massachusetts is accepted on both sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the amendment is agreed to. The amendment (No. 3398) was agreed to.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. HARKIN. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. KERRY. I thank the Chair and the distinguished manager.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:41 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. CARPER).

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from the State of Delaware, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I ask to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senator is recognized.

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I wanted to take a few minutes to do what Senator BOXER did yesterday, which is essentially to update the Senate on the catastrophic fires in California. I offer these words on behalf of Senator BOXER and myself.

Today there are 14 fires, big fires, burning in California. The bulk of them

are uncontained and out of control. The containment factor is very small. More than half a million people have been told to evacuate their homes. More than 309,000 acres have been destroyed by fire, over 400 miles, from north of Los Angeles to San Diego and now across the Mexican border, and more, we fear, will be destroyed.

The deaths, fortunately, today are limited to one, with 34 injured throughout southern California, some of them firefighters. High wind and high temperatures persist. A red flag warning is in effect for the California coast from Monterey to the Mexican border. More than 1,000 homes have been destroyed; 11,500 are now threatened. Today more than 100 commercial buildings have been destroyed, and 2,000 are threatened; 52 outbuildings have been destroyed and 550 are threatened.

Health warnings have been issued because of smoke and particulate matter. As you know, these fires are driven by hurricane and gale-force Santa Ana winds, which are hot and contrary to the prevailing westerly flow, east to west. They are fueled by bone-dry brush from years of drought and virtually no humidity. Humidity is below 10 percent.

Fires are raging still in Malibu, at Lake Arrowhead in Irvine and Santa Clarita. The Arrowhead area is particularly dangerous because there are half a million acres of pine-beetle infested dead trees waiting to go up.

Of course, they are raging in San Diego County, which is bearing the brunt of two major fires which well could join. Already, the 300,000 people in San Diego County alone have been told to evacuate. More than 10,000 of them are now taking refuge in Qualcomm Stadium, home to the San Diego Chargers. These people will be there for 48 to 72 more hours and possibly more.

Sanitary supplies are going to become a problem. It is going to be a real effort to get food and water to these evacuees and the hundreds of thousands of people displaced around southern California.

Both Senator BOXER and I spoke to the Governor, and he has declared a seven-county disaster area. Yesterday the President declared southern California a disaster area to be able to speed the Federal Emergency Management Agency's relief, which is critical.

This is going to be a real test of FEMA. We are going to learn whether FEMA actually learned from the hurricane in New Orleans, a test of whether FEMA has gotten its act together post-Katrina.

FEMA must act quickly and urgently to get help to California. The State is going to need cots; it is going to need blankets; it is going to need water, food, and, most importantly, those sanitary facilities that are needed for the people who are camping out today, sleeping in cars, located in schools, or in Qualcomm Stadium.